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PRESIDENT OF BRAZIL CONCLUDES VISIT TO EQUATORIAL GUINEA

MALABO (July 6, 2010) ~ President of Brazil, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva wrapped up a state visit yesterday to Equatorial Guinea (Republica de Guinea Ecuatorial), which included the signing of multiple cooperation agreements, economic meetings, and festivities.

(For video on President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva's visit to Equatorial Guinea, visit www.youtube.com/equatorialguineanews)

The Brazilian President arrived in the capital city of Malabo on July 4 and was greeted by President Obiang Nguema Mbasogo and various high-ranking members of the Equatorial Guinean Government at Malabo International Airport. The following day, the Brazilian delegation's activities began early in the morning with a meeting of businessmen from both countries to discuss the exchange of common interests. President Obiang welcomed the Brazilian President with full military honors, followed by an hour-long private meeting and a signing ceremony of five cooperation agreements presided by the two heads of state.

The meeting between the two heads of state was characterized by an atmosphere of friendship. As part of the visit, President Lula da Silva and President Obiang examined the means to strengthen ties between the two countries, exchanged views on various issues, including international relations, with a particular emphasis on United Nations reform, the global economic crisis, climate change and transnational threats that plague humanity in general.

Both presidents expressed their agreement to safeguard democratic principles, cooperate against organized crime and to combat other challenges facing both nations. President Obiang was pleased with the support of the Government of Brazil concerning the candidacy of Equatorial Guinea as a full member of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP). President Obiang hoped that Equatorial Guinea would become a member of the Community in time for the next CPLP Summit to be held July 2011 in Luanda, Angola.

The two countries issued a Joint Communiqué, highlighting the good relations that exist between the two and called upon developed countries to "ensure that measures taken to remedy the worldwide economic crisis not affect the economies of developing countries."

The heads of state reaffirmed the need for close cooperation in combating international organized crime, terrorism, mercenaries, piracy, drug trafficking and human trafficking, money laundering and other cross-border crimes by renewing their determination to contribute fully to the efforts of the international community to combat and eradicate these issues.

The two delegations identified important sectors for cooperation, including Fisheries Development, Agro-forestry, Infrastructure and Public Works, Human Resources Training. The five cooperation agreements signed by the two countries were:

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- Agreement on the Establishment of a Joint Commission on Cooperation
- Agreement on the Abolition of Visas for Holders of Diplomatic Passports, Nationals, officials or service members;
- Agreement on Defense Cooperation
- Agreement on paid employment for dependents of diplomatic, consular, military, administrative and technical staff of diplomatic missions, consulates and at international organizations
- Memorandum of Understanding on training and exchange of experiences in the Diplomatic and Consular spheres

Immediately after the signing of the agreements, the two delegations participated in a luncheon during which both presidents recalled the common historical characteristics that unite the two states and hopes that continued relations would lead to new agreements in the future.

Brazilian President Lula da Silva said: "Equatorial Guinea has tremendous potential to strengthen trade relations" and recalled the important bilateral trade growth in recent years. He continued: "With the creation of the Joint Commission we will increase bilateral trade and further advance our exchange, which is why we have brought a large business delegation with representatives in areas of infrastructure, agricultural machinery, telecommunications, aerospace, energy, etc."

President Obiang thanked the Brazilian President for his visit and expressed his country's admiration for the growth that has taken place in Brazil in recent years. "For us, the Republic of Brazil is a country that serves as a reference development model and it is a goal for Equatorial Guinea to be a reference country by Horizon 2020."

Following the luncheon, President da Silva and President Obiang visited some of the energy facilities of Punta Europa, including the Marathon plant, and Equatorial Guinea LNG Holdings Limited (EG LNG), a national liquefied natural gas company. The Brazilian president was particularly interested in the advanced facilities of EG LNG, which owns the only suspension bridge in the liquefied natural gas industry in the world. EG LNG began operations in 2007 and has shown excellent results.

After the visit, the Brazilian delegation departed Malabo with a farewell by President Obiang and members of the Equatorial Guinea Government.

Luis Ignacio Lula da Silva was the first Brazilian president to visit Equatorial Guinea 36 years after the establishment of relations between both states. The opening of the Embassy of Equatorial Guinea in Brasilia in 2005 and the Embassy of Brazil in Malabo in 2006 have significantly contributed to a stronger and more open cooperation between the two countries.

For video on President Luiz Ignacio Lula da Silva's visit to Equatorial Guinea, visit www.youtube.com/equatorialguineanews.

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About Equatorial Guinea

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea (República de Guinea Ecuatorial) is the only Spanish-speaking country in Africa, and one of the smallest nations on the continent. In the late-1990s, American companies helped discover the country's oil and natural gas resources, which only within the last five years began contributing to the global energy supply. Equatorial Guinea is now working to serve as a pillar of stability and security in its region of West Central Africa. The country will host the 2011 Summit of the African Union. For more information, visit <http://www.guineaequatorialpress.com>.

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